

Renewable energy to boost Mediterranean region's local economies

The Maghrenov Consortium, promoted by KIC InnoEnergy, analyzes how education, research and business creation can be stimulated in the Mediterranean emerging economies

Barcelona, 13 February 2014 – Experts from France, Morocco, Tunisia and Spain recently gathered in Barcelona to mark the beginning of the three-year long MAGHRENOV project, coordinated by KIC InnoEnergy. The two-day meeting, that was hosted by the **Universitat Politècnica de Catalunya · BarcelonaTech (UPC)**, analyzed how education, research, innovation and business creation in the renewable energy field can stimulate Mediterranean economies and bring the Maghreb Countries closer to European Research Area.

The MAGHRENOV initiative aims to establish a common Euro-Mediterranean innovation network by addressing the energy challenges and opportunities in the Mediterranean basin. According to Richard Biagoni, MAGHRENOV Project Coordinator and CEO of KIC InnoEnergy France, “the Mediterranean region needs to increase the knowledge around the renewable energy and the energy efficiency challenges”.

Along with KIC InnoEnergy and the UPC, the MAGHRENOV consortium counts with the support of the [IRESEN](#) (The Moroccan Research Institute for Solar and New Energies), the [R&D Maroc](#) (The Moroccan Association for Research and Development), ANME (the [Tunisian National Agency for Energy Management](#)) and the private consultancy [ITEMS International](#).

The Mediterranean region is key, as it is a bridge between Europe's renewable energies industry and the emerging markets in Africa. As it was exposed in a recent report issued by the EuroMed advisors on the Common Research and Innovation Agenda (CRIIA), countries as Tunisia and Morocco are undergoing rapid social, demographic, economic, environmental and political changes. “These challenges require a strategy and implementation plan to build a common innovation and research-based culture in all these countries”, concludes Biagoni.

The MAGHRENOV project has the potential to become a catalyst which could dramatically contribute to the development of the renewable energy sector in countries like Morocco and Tunisia.

Holistic approach

In order to achieve these goals, the experts who met in Barcelona agreed to develop a three year plan around three major objectives:

- Building human resource and knowledge capacity and fostering innovation on Mediterranean Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency (RE&EE) markets
- Bringing together RE&EE initiatives in the EU and Mediterranean Partner Countries (MPC) in order to support development of sustainable energies
- Fostering mobility of young academics among businesses and research sector in the EU

The project includes different activities, some of which focus on the need to establish a flow of entrepreneurial human potential consisting of young people coming both from the EU and the Maghreb countries.

“This mix between young talented and experienced professionals should help improve innovation and foster business development in the renewable energy field in the Mediterranean countries”, says Diego Pavía, CEO of KIC InnoEnergy.

Partnering with clean tech venture capital firms

Diego Pavía also exposed the need to share experiences from the local entrepreneurs with clean tech venture capital firms, in order to put these emerging markets in the VC’s radar and help the development of new businesses in the renewable energy market.

“KIC InnoEnergy has recently promoted an innovative agreement with the top 10 clean tech venture capital firms in Europe. We are aware of the importance to reduce the gap between entrepreneurs and funds in order to develop business creation. Entrepreneurs face the same problems everywhere, so the MAGHRENOV Consortium should promote this kind of partnerships, too”, concludes Pavía.

More about the MAGHRENOV Consortium (www.maghrenov.eu)

MAGHRENOV aims to support innovation in the Renewable Energy & Energy Efficiency (RE&EE) sector in the Mediterranean basin. The Consortium brings together partners from Europe and Maghreb countries, whose shared goal is to establish a common Euro-Mediterranean innovation space. The final goal of the project is to translate the lessons-learned to the policy agenda in Europe and the Maghreb region, as well as to disseminate its achievements among important stakeholders in the sector. Therefore, MAGHRENOV will develop relationships with existing networks and projects such as INCO-NET MIRA, Bi-region Coordination projects (BILAT projects), ERA-WIDE projects in the field of Renewable energies, ERASMUS + etc. and will take advantage of Horizon 2020’s main focus on innovation.

KIC InnoEnergy (www.kic-innoenergy.com)

KIC InnoEnergy SE is a leading European company on sustainable energy, founded in 2010. KIC InnoEnergy invests in research and education programmes, as well as innovation, commercialization and product development, in order to secure Europe’s global competitiveness in the field of renewable energies. With its headquarters in the Netherlands, the company develops its activity through a network of offices located in Benelux, France, Germany, Iberia, Poland and Sweden. KIC InnoEnergy is financially supported by the European Institute of Innovation and Technology (EIT), and, although it is a profit-oriented company, it has a “not for dividend” financial strategy as it reinvests its profits back into the organization’s activities. Its shareholders have committed to a 7 year industrial plan in which they pledge to mobilize 700M€ of resources during the period 2011-2015, only.

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